

issues

Message from the State Veterinarian

Recently, Indiana has become involved in a case of bovine tuberculosis (TB). The routine test of a beef cow slaughtered in Pennsylvania was traced back to a small farm in Southeastern Indiana. The news came as a surprise since the state was declared bovine tuberculosis-free in 1984. Good animal husbandry practices and proper testing have allowed Indiana to maintain “free” status. Although the herd test results all came back negative, BOAH staff will continue working to determine the source of the bovine tuberculosis.

Throughout the TB investigation one tool has proven very helpful to BOAH veterinarians: registered premises. The ability to use a database to identify the initial herd, along with high-risk herds such as adjacent operations and those that are tied via an animal trace, has helped the investigation move at a faster pace. BOAH field staff have not had to spend hours driving local roads trying to find contact information for herd owners. This case reiterates the importance for all Hoosier herds to have a premise ID. More registered premises means quicker trace-backs, which translates to a safer and healthier environment for animal agriculture in the state of Indiana.

Another useful tool has been the 840 electronic identification (EID) tags. As our staff tests animals they are placing the 840 tags in the herd. This equipment greatly assists the veterinarians in identifying the exact animals without error when completing the TB tests on a return visit. The 840 tags also allow the information gathered to be input immediately into an electronic form. This greatly decreases paperwork, manpower and human error.

Indiana is not alone in battling TB. California, Michigan and Minnesota are all handling cases in multiple bovine and cervid operations. In early December, North Dakota officials also announced that they are following up on a TB trace-back to a cattle herd in their state. Each state has taken a different approach toward eliminating TB. BOAH is analyzing and comparing all of their tactics to identify what has and has not worked. The hope is to put together the best possible plan of action for this state, and for our situation.

BOAH, out of concern for increasing cases nationwide during the last six to eight years, has stepped up training for regulatory and private practitioners, as well as state meat inspectors. Surveillance is a critical tool, considering Indiana's case of TB was discovered through routine testing at a slaughter plant. Since increased surveillance is important, private practitioners who would like a “refresher course” in administering caudal fold tests for TB should contact a local BOAH field veterinarian.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has also been a key partner in advanced education for hunters. For nearly a decade, BOAH and DNR have been distributing essential information for hunters and processors in the Indiana Hunting and Trapping Guide.

BOAH will strive to maintain open lines of communication to veterinarians, producers and consumers during the entire TB case. Much of this can be done through the BOAH Web site www.in.gov/boah. Updates, along with other general information about the disease, can be seen in the TB section of the web site as quickly as they occur.

Bret D. Marsh, DVM
Indiana State Veterinarian

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Bret D Marsh, DVM
State Veterinarian

BOAH Board Actions

DURING THEIR regular October 2 meeting, Board members:

- Adopted the Agency Correction to rules recodifying all state rules and regulations.
- Held a public meeting and adopted the rule to add grading and certification of meat and meat products to BOAH's services.

Companion Animal

THE INDIANA State Department of Health has amended the protocol regarding rabies testing for the state of Indiana. The new testing rules limit the number of animals that will be tested and increases the number of animals to be observed under quarantine first. A complete copy of the policy change can be found on the BOAH Web site at www.in.gov/boah located in the "Newsroom".

Premise ID

CURRENT PREMISES registered are as follows: avian: 5339; bovine: 23,003; camelid: 463; caprine: 6833; cervids: 638; equine: 6292; fish: 200; ovine: 5545; and porcine: 10,294, for a total of 36,485 premises. Please note, some producers may have more than one premise species on a single location, thus making the all premises total less than the combined numbers.

Equine

CONTAGIOUS EQUINE metritis (CEM) was discovered in several stallions being housed in Kentucky in early December. Multiple horses were traced to Indiana and test results on three stallions came back positive. Trace-outs are now being conducted on the three positive stallions. Testing on the remaining exposed animals continues, and more information is being collected to find the source of the infection. Since the case is continually changing please visit the BOAH web site at www.in.gov/boah for the most current information.

INDIANA, LIKE all states with horses, is facing the challenges with numerous neglect cases. BOAH, along with the Indiana Horse Council and Indiana Association of Equine Practitioners, is working with representatives from the various horse breeds and disciplines to formulate plans to help the plight of the unwanted horse. Dr. Tim Bartlett, Director of Equine Programs with BOAH, states, "This issue is the most serious issue that the equine industry, as a whole, has faced in our lifetime."

Avian

MID-NOVEMBER was a busy time for the entire BOAH staff, especially the Avian Division, as the avian flu/pandemic flu full-scale exercise was being acted out. Months of preparation and meetings came down to one very busy day of "play" where several state agencies acted out exactly what they would do during an avian influenza event in the state of Indiana. The exercise took place at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center located near North Vernon. Staff members practiced surveillance and diagnostics on "chickens", two forms of euthanasia and proper donning and doffing of personal protection equipment. Other state agencies participating included the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, Indiana State Department of Health, and first responders from Districts 6 and 10. The state emergency operations center and joint information center were activated to help simulate the realness of the event. Also participating were several ASERT veterinarians who contributed much knowledge and skill. Ask most BOAH staff and they will be able to share much more about the exercise.

Scrapie

INDIANA CONTINUES efforts to eradicate scrapie from Indiana flocks. Currently, Indiana has the highest prevalence of scrapie of any state, based on the number of sheep. This information reiterates the importance of routine testing and the slaughter surveillance program (RSSS).

PRODUCERS CAN participate in a voluntary scrapie flock certification program (SFCP) which monitors scrapie in sheep/goat flocks and promotes regular testing and good animal husbandry. This program also allows easier movement of animals by providing a certification. More information is available online at www.in.gov/boah.

FREE SCRAPIE tags are available to producers. By law all sheep are required to be tagged with official USDA eartags before leaving the farm. Producers can place orders through BOAH by calling toll-free at 1-877-747-3038 ext. 328.

Cattle/Ruminants

BOAH IS offering free 840 electronic identification (EID) tags to cattle producers in Indiana as a part of a pilot program. The tags are yellow, full-duplex, button-style tags that bear a 15-digit identification code beginning with 840. All that is required to receive the tags is a valid premise ID number. The program was officially introduced at the Hoosier Beef Congress in December, and area veterinarians will be distributing tags at various industry venues. Tags available while supplies last. Visit the BOAH Web site at www.in.gov/boah for more detailed information and to print a request form.

MICHIGAN STATE Department of Agriculture no longer considers Iosco and Shiawassee counties as high risk for bovine tuberculosis. The change resulted after testing in the areas revealed no animals to be positive for the disease.

BLOOD SAMPLES taken from 2,000 cows near Bondurant, WY have all tested negative for brucellosis. The news is welcomed by Wyoming cattle producers who have been battling the disease, particularly in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

AFTER THREE years of testing for bovine tuberculosis in Minnesota, USDA is officially splitting the state into two zones. Most of the state will be upgraded to Modified Accredited Advanced (MAA) while the infected portion will remain at Modified Accredited. This change will allow the state's funds to be directed to the infected area.

ASERT

DISTRICT ASERT teams have been meeting to introduce all new team members and to provide additional resources and updates to all.

EIGHT ASERT veterinarians participated in BOAH recent animal health emergency exercise. Participants were able to assist in euthanasia practices, diagnostics, or surveillance during an avian influenza outbreak. For more detailed information about the exercise please read the Avian section of this newsletter.

Dairy

INDIANA STATE Department of Agriculture (ISDA) conducted a meeting this fall to review the current dairy labeling procedure and guidelines for the state, as requested by the legislature. Industry representatives, consumer groups and dairy farmers were in attendance at the meeting to add comments and questions. ISDA has compiled a report and recommendations for legislature based upon their findings. The report can be viewed on the ISDA web site at www.in.gov/isda under the "Legislative Information" tab.

THE ECONOMIC downturn has made an impact on Indiana's dairy industry. New farm construction has slowed greatly, due to banks' stricter lending requirements. Also, large manufacturing layoffs in the La Grange Country area has caused an expansion in the number of Grade A Amish farms.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Dean Foods of Rochester, IN which was selected as the Grade A & Ice Cream Grand Champion of the World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest. The contest was comprised

of several categories including cheese, butter, fluid milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, ice cream, sour cream, sherbet, buttermilk, sour cream dips, whipping cream, dried whey and creative/innovative products from throughout the United States.

Aquaculture

USDA ANNOUNCED on October 28 the effective date for the interim rule regarding “Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS); Interstate Movement and Import Restrictions on Certain Live Fish” would be delayed until Jan. 9, 2009. When the interim rule takes effect it will immediately impact the requirements for transporting fish, susceptible to the disease, into and out of Indiana. While the comment period for the interim rule was not extended, there may be another comment period when the revised rule is published. Those involved in the fish industry may track developments by visiting the USDA Web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/vhs.shtml.

Animal Issues in Disaster

ANIMAL ISSUES in Disaster classes allow area first responders to come together and discuss what they could do in the case of an animal health emergency. If you or someone you know would like to host a course please contact Dr. Sandra Norman at 317/227-0323 or snorman@boah.in.gov for more information.

Swine

BOAH HAS once again received notice of Indiana’s Stage V State-Federal-Industry Pseudorabies Eradication Program status. This signifies the fifth consecutive year for Indiana’s pseudorabies-free status.

BOAH IS implementing the Interstate Movement of Swine within a Production System program, which allows producers to move their animals between their facilities without individual animal ID and without a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI). Several requirements must be met before a facility can operate using the system, one which includes a detailed written swine production health plan signed and retained by the herd veterinarian. Producers wanting to participate should contact Dr. Melissa Justice at mjustice@boah.in.gov, or 317-439-4888 for more information.

Cervids

SINCE CWD testing has increased, trained private veterinarians are now able to assist BOAH in sample collection. Practitioners who would like to be trained for CWD sample collection should call Dr. Kerry Peterson at 317/227-0314 or request training from a BOAH field veterinarian.

INDIANA’S DEPARTMENT of Natural Resources (DNR) has collected approximately 800 samples from hunter-harvested and road-killed deer across Indiana to test for chronic wasting disease (CWD). Testing on the deer will take place over the next several months.

AFTER MICHIGAN’S discovery of CWD in a breeding facility last August, the state has stepped up surveillance, especially during the hunting season. Michigan placed several CWD check stations across the state, particularly in the Kent County area, to collect samples. Michigan’s current situation serves as a reminder to all cervid owners, hunters, and veterinarians to always be on the look-out for any fatal diseases.

Biosecurity/Planning

ANOTHER ANIMAL health full-scale exercise will take place in late summer of 2008. District 1 (counties in northwestern Indiana) will be practicing emergency response to a zoonotic disease in dairy cattle. Like the avian flu exercise, the assistance of local veterinarians and/or ASERT members may be needed. More information will come as the details of the exercise are finalized.